



Animal Care Australia

The Animal Care Expert

Quarterly newsletter of ANIMAL CARE AUSTRALIA INC.

"Animal welfare by the experts — those who keep, care for and breed animals"

Inside this edition:

- ⇒ No Christmas feast
- ⇒ Are you prepared for summer with your pets
- ⇒ Seeking spider egg sacs
- ⇒ Broken promises: How NPWS is failing aviculture, conservation & preservation



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"Animal Care Australia acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we reside, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present."

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Watch out for our next issue
in March 2025.

Click to read our [previous issues](#)



Are you prepared to enjoy Summer with your pets?

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Article cover: Stock Photo ID: [2180966313](#)

It's so important to make sure you're all prepared during hot weather to care for your pets, livestock and even native wildlife.

All pets must have access to cool, shady areas. It is ideal to bring pets indoors (where possible) on hot days. If you're feeling warm, chances are they are too. Make sure the animals' enclosures are out of direct sunlight and protected from the sun as the shade moves throughout the day.

Small pets, such as rabbits, guinea pigs and birds, are particularly susceptible to heat. Short nosed or flat faced dog breeds are also more susceptible to heat stroke e.g. Pugs, English and French bulldogs. If allowed free run in a laundry or bathroom, they will benefit from the cool tiles. If this is not possible, drape their cage with wet towels and provide a sturdy ice pack or frozen water bottle for the animal to lean against so it can regulate its own body temperature.

Provide plenty of fresh, cool water in large water containers. Be sure to provide multiple containers in case one is spilled. Place the containers in the shade and add some ice to the water to keep it cool.

Extreme heat is a challenge for everyone especially our pets. During heat waves and hot days it is vital that you take extra precautions to keep your pets cool and prevent them from falling victim to heat exhaustion.

Never leave animals in a vehicle, in the sun, even with the windows down! Animals can't sweat; heat stress and death can occur within six minutes.

If your pet seems to be in discomfort, try wetting their feet and misting water onto their face. This is an option for dogs, cats, ferrets, poultry and caged birds as many animals control their inner temperature through their feet. It's important not to saturate a

bird's feathers as this can cause them to go into shock.

IMPORTANT: At all times, if you are unsure about the health of your pet during hot days – seek veterinary advice immediately

Species specific care:

Birds:

Indoor birds should be housed in the coolest room in the house – but not placed directly in front of a fan or air-conditioner, instead use a spray bottle to keep birds cool.

Birds kept in aviaries should be provided with misting sprays/sprinklers over the aviary with the spray as fine as possible. This will prevent high temperatures & humidity build-up.

Do not turn misting off until the extensive heat has faded. Turning off too early will allow for increased humidity build-up which

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will affect your birds.

Provide ample water dishes including shallow dishes for birds to bathe.

Cats:

If your cat begins to pant, this is not a good sign and you need to wrap the cat in a cool, wet towel immediately. Don't use ice-cold water or ice as this may worsen the problem. Apply a fan/fanning to maximise heat loss.

Heat stress symptoms to look for:

- Panting which increases as heatstroke progresses
- Drooling, salivating
- Agitation, restlessness
- Very red or pale gums

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- Bright red tongue
- Increased heart rate
- Breathing distress
- Dizziness and staggering
- Vomiting diarrhoea (possibly with blood)
- Lethargy or weakness
- Signs of mental confusion, delirium
- Muscle tremors
- Seizures
- Collapsing and lying down
- Little to no urine production



To prevent heatstroke, fill a zip lock bag around a quarter full, get out as much air as you can, seal it & lay it flat in the freezer. Place under a towel or sheet to make a cool spot if you cat chooses it. Access to plenty of fresh and clean drinking water, and give access to a cool space, tiled floor or well ventilated

Dogs:

For dogs, heat exhaustion can be dangerous – even fatal. In many cases heat exhaustion is preventable and there are a few simple things you can do to protect your dog this summer.

It is important to note that short-nosed (brachycephalic) breeds of dogs are at higher risk of heat exhaustion than other breeds. Extra care should also be taken with dogs that are obese, elderly, arthritic or have respiratory difficulties as they are more prone to heat exhaustion than others.



Walking your dog when the ground is too hot can cause serious damage to their paws. Instead, walk your dog in the coolness of the early morning or evening.

Horses:

Horses can tolerate low temperatures much better than high. Ensure they have access to shade throughout the day and will not run out of water. Hosing can help cool a hot horse, and you do not need to scrape them.

Heat stress symptoms to look for:

- Excessive panting and tongue hanging out
- Wobbly on feet

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- Excessive salivation
- Warm/hot to touch
- Lethargic
- Head drooping
- If it becomes severe, cattle will tremble and lose coordination
- Refusal to lie down.
- Increased respiratory rate

Quick Treatment:

Treatment involves getting the internal body temperature back down by cooling.



- Place animal in a cool shaded area
- Make up a solution of Vytrate & feed (Vytrate is used as it replaces lost electrolytes)
- Wet the animal all over with a towel. This includes sensitive areas such as armpit, under the stomach and between the legs & neck. Keep repeating this until the skin has cooled down.



Insects:

Keeping insects below 22 degrees Celsius and enclosures out of direct sunlight is the best practice. Small digital thermometers can be purchased online and placed inside enclosures to monitor.

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Reptiles:

While many reptiles can cope with extreme heat, enclosures that do not allow sufficient flow of air or space for the reptile to find a cooler location can kill your reptiles quickly

Species of gecko in particular do not do well in extreme temperatures.

On extreme temperature days it is best to turn off heating & lights and provide frozen water bottles or a shallow dish of water to allow your reptile the ability to regulate their own body temperature.

Small mammals:

With small mammals including rabbits, guinea pigs, rats & mice it is important to keep them cool as they do not cope well in the heat requiring air circulation to cool their bodies down.

Fans are the best for this along with keeping them indoors in the coolest room of your house or place a frozen bottle of water with them, this will provide a cool refuge and the animal can hydrate by licking up the cool condensation that forms on the outside of the bottle.

If outdoors, help prevent heat stroke by keeping the rabbits in the shade, putting shade cloth over the pen, ensuring constant access to fresh water, give the rabbits damp towels to lie on, and use ice bricks covered in a tea towel. Ideally all should be kept indoors during extreme heat.

DO NOT put a rabbit in cold water or



directly in front of a fan or air conditioner. This is too much of a contrast in temperature and could put your rabbit into shock. Rats & mice should not be kept outdoors.

Small mammals can start stressing from the heat when the temperature gets over 24 degrees and they can suffer from heat stroke when the temperature is over 30 degrees.

Small mammals will not drink tepid water on hot days, so regularly refreshing the water is ideal to encourage your pet to drink.

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Native Wildlife:

Leave water dishes of varying sizes including saucers or shallow dishes with pebbles and larger containers and bird baths out in shaded locations for our native wildlife to access.

Small lizards and bees will benefit from the saucers while larger animals and birds will enjoy the easy access to water.

For the benefit of wildlife keep your dogs and cats away from these areas.

Ensure your swimming pool is covered. Many animals drown after trying to access water from a swimming pool.

Flying fox colonies can be severely affected by lack of fruit, blossoms and water. Leaving a string of hanging apples will benefit them greatly. Ensure the area you do this is out of reach of climbing cats.





What to do during a natural emergency.



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Article cover: Stock Photo ID: [1437869741](#)

Australia regularly experiences severe storms that cause flooding, as well as cyclones, extreme heat and bushfires, along with the occasional earth tremor. It's always a good time to prepare a disaster plan for your pets. Preparing a plan ahead of time can ensure you don't get caught out when an emergency arises.

Remember these four key points to ensure you and your pets are prepared for an emergency.

1. Emergency plan

Just as you should develop an emergency plan for you and your family, ensure you have a plan which incorporates your pets. Plan for several days (at least a week in most cases) without food or water, and ensure you always have enough non-perishable food in waterproof containers, drinking water, necessary items, such as kitty litter and any essential pet medications in the event of an evacuation or stranding.

As soon as possible, decide if you will stay or go, and make sure your pet is included in these plans. Today a greater number of evacuation centres take pets, but just in case they won't, consider nominating some friends who could take you and your pets if needed. This plan should include making a 'grab n go kit'.

2. Pet identification

In case you get separated from your pets, ensure their identification is current and visible. Although all dogs and cats should be microchipped, and these details kept current, it's also important to have a name tag on your pet's collar with your contact details, so your pets can be quickly reunited with you. Check your pet's microchip details are up-to-date online. If you've forgotten your pet's microchip number, or you can't remember which database they are registered on, call your local council or veterinary clinic who will be able to point you in the right direction. Write your contact number on the backs or hooves of your farm pets and livestock.

3. Evacuating with pets

If you ever need to evacuate from your property, it's likely to be a very stressful and scary time. Plan well ahead of any evacuation, particularly if you have pets. Take your pets with you to your prearranged location, such as boarding kennels or a friend's house, if you can. Pack your 'grab n go kit' into your vehicle. If no kit, ensure you have their cages and supplies readily available and keep your pets in the house with you just before evacuation to prevent them from running away. If you have horses, try to evacuate them well ahead of time to a pre-arranged location. If in doubt, it's always better to be cautious and evacuate early.

4. After the emergency

Before returning home with your pets, check to make sure your house and backyard will be safe. Carefully look for any live wires, contaminated water or sharp objects.

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Consider keeping your pets inside for the first day or so to help them settle back into their home after the evacuation. It's likely they will be stressed and exhausted after the event, so keeping them close and safe is prudent. If you are worried about your pet after an emergency, contact your local veterinarian who will be able to assist.

If your pet goes missing during an emergency, post on social media as well as contact your local shelters, council and emergency contacts. Remember these places will be overrun and likely under-staffed, be consistent and check daily. Ensure you have the pets details and description and as soon as it is permissible attend the shelters and pounds in person to look over the animals. Many shelter staff are not trained in accurate breed identification so don't risk it – don't just take their word over the phone.

Storm Tips:

Keep your pets calm during storms:

- Be aware of signs of anxiety – especially if you know your pet is scared of storms.
 - Try to act as if nothing is happening and be happy and calm to set a good example.
 - Don't tie them up or leave them out in the yard. Bring them inside into a 'safe space' with their bed.
 - Turn on soothing music to drown out the noise.
 - Give them their favourite treat.
- Chronic storm phobia sufferers should see a vet or behaviourist for treatment or training options.

High Fire Danger & Bushfire Tips:

If you are leaving early with your pets, remember to prepare your pets as well.

- Always have bedding, food and water ready to go and make sure you can transport them – always put your own safety before the safety of your pets.
- Know where you could house your pets if you decide to leave early. This

may include boarding kennels, a relative/friend's place or you may be able to keep them with you.

- If you choose to keep your pets with you, confine them early. Pets are safest inside a secure room, on a lead or in carriers. Make sure they have plenty of water to drink.
 - Have towels and woollen blankets available to cover and protect your pets.
 - Make sure your pets can be identified easily. Microchip your animals and include your details such as your phone number on collars, on the backs of your horses & livestock.
 - Discuss with neighbours about protecting your pets if you are not at home during a bushfire. Keep in regular contact with your neighbours during the fire danger period to let them know your plans.
 - Keep your Grab N Go Kit for pets within easy reach so you are ready to leave early.
- Practice how you will move your pets if you leave. It takes longer than you think.

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Bushfire tips:

- Animals do not cope with smoke. Keep them indoors if possible.
- Aviaries and outdoor enclosures can be covered with dampened towels or hessian bags to absorb smoke & keep the animals cooler.
- If fire approaches follow any emergency services instructions.
- Avoid loading horses (or livestock) as fire is approaching. If staying, open all internal property gates, so animals can move away from immediate danger, but never open gates into roads or other vehicle access ways.
- With horses, remove halters and rugs. Ensure your mobile number is written on their backs (use auction crayon for this) so that you can be contacted should animals find themselves re-located away from home.

Check animals feet after fire passes through, as feet are often burned on hot ground. Have first aid supplies ready.

Have a plan and a 'grab & go' kit in case of an emergency



AWARENESS

1. Pack Supplies & your 'Grab & Go' kit

Use easy to carry & stackable containers

2. Plan ahead

Plan where the animals can stay during the evacuation and the cleanup/rebuilding. Make sure your pets and neighbours know each other. They may be needed urgently if you are away

3. Identification

Animals might run or hide — so you need ways to identify them. Have collars, tags, microchips, write your phone number on larger animals, and have photos of them for easy identification.

'Grab & Go' kit

Pack enough for 3-7 days for all of your animals.

Include transport, restraint, food, water, medications, bedding, toileting & first aid:

- ♦ cages/carriers for each animal
- ♦ muzzle, leash, lead rope, head collar.
- ♦ food, water & bowls/dishes, feed bucket — can opener, spoon, scoop.
- ♦ blankets, towels, bedding, coats/rugs.
- ♦ medications & first aid items
- ♦ litter, litter trays & poo bags
- ♦ favourite toy or any other essential items to last them 3-7 days.
- ♦ vets contact info incl: photos of vaccination certificates and other important medical info

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Submissions & Correspondence Reports



Review of Animal Protection Act & Regulations

June 2024: September 2024: Animal Care Australia has responded to the review.

The Animal Welfare Branch of the government has proposed a number of amendments to the current Animal Protection Act as part of a Review following the assenting of the Act in 2022.

While Animal Care Australia supported a number of the proposals we are concerned with the general direction the enforcement proposals are heading. It is clear that animal rights influence has made its way into the department.

The top points:

- Animal Care Australia repeated our opposition to the name of the Act. Animal protection is not animal welfare.
- Animal Care Australia is TOTALLY OPPOSED to the minimum level of care being a 'strict liability offence' which would result in removing the burden of proof for the prosecution. Meaning anyone could be prosecuted without proof.
- Animal Care Australia totally opposes the removal of 48 hours' notice for private premises or in the case of commercial premises where the intended visiting time is to be after business hours. The power of entry should remain with a warrant, consent or immediate danger to the animal.
- Animal Care Australia supports a provision that allows entry to a vehicle to alleviate immediate suffering.

Animal Care Australia requested meetings with the Minister & department to discuss the proposals.

You can read our full response here:



Animal Care Australia now a core stakeholder to Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

November 2024: Animal Care Australia received written confirmation of inclusion as a core stakeholder for the Australian Capital Territory Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

Following several assurances from separate Ministers responsible for the ACT animal welfare portfolio confirmation, Animal Care Australia completed a Freedom of Information request and wrote to the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Secretariat in order to ensure our input is sought on future reviews and legislative

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changes to animal welfare, as well as pet and companion animal legislation.

This is a major win for us given the recent releases of Codes of practice for the keeping of small mammals as well as for horses. Those COPs already assented include a number of anomalies and a significant ideological focus rather than animal welfare science based standards and guidelines.

Following the recent elections in the ACT Animal Care Australia will now work throughout 2025 to seek amendments to the COPs and to ensure the ideological inclusions are met with resistance and responded to with logical and welfare-based feedback.

You can read our last correspondence here:



ACA responds to Inquiry into the Management of cat populations

November 2024: Animal Care Australia has submitted to the Inquiry into the management of cat populations in NSW.

Animal Care Australia provided a number of recommendations in particular noting:

- * the impact of cats — mostly stray and feral — on native animals in metropolitan and regional settings
- * our support of cat containment policies including specific caveats that must be included in any containment policy
- * the welfare benefits for cats under contained conditions while highlighting the need to implement containment gradually in order for cats to adjust
- * the importance of community education programs and responsible pet ownership initiatives
- * local councils will require assistance in implementing and enforcing cat containment policies
- * the importance of implementing large scale cat desexing programs

- * the impact that stray and semi-owned cats have on the pound system when their management is excluded from cat containment policies
- * the need for more humane options for reducing the feral cat population

You can read our full submission here:



ACA seeks clarification of wording on Puppy Farm amendments

November 2024: Animal Care Australia has sought clarification from the NSW Govt over wording of some amendments of the recently assented Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Puppy Farm Bill.

Following extensive consultation with the NSW Minister's staff and representatives of the Department of Primary Industries Animal Care Australia expressed some concerns with the

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wording of the assented Act, particularly around staffing ratios.

Animal Care Australia sought a clear understanding of staffing numbers and the required amount of time for each staff member to be present in order to be compliant.

While on the whole Animal Care Australia supports the amendments we will tentatively await the departments' public education and information packages in order to ensure a proper understanding of how the compliance of these changes should be carried out by breeders.

Of course, as we know, an understanding of compliance is vital in order to ensure the ability of enforcement cannot be misused or abused by any relevant agency or inspector.

The government has assured us that a 24/7 presence on a premises is not required — we believe the Act is not clear on that point. Time will tell.

You can view our communications with the Ministers Office/staff via these two links:

First contact:



Follow-up:



ACA responds to Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Review 2024

November 2024: Animal Care Australia has responded to the NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Review.

Following extensive consultation with members of ACA who are also carers within the Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector, we identified a number of issues and provided a submission to the Review.

Animal Care Australia notes the 'Messages that have been heard' responses within the Discussion Paper appear to be focused on creating one big sector. Animal Care Australia supports the exact opposite. It is our strong recommendation that more

organisations and individuals should be permitted to be established. Competition is healthy – exclusivity is not.

Animal Care Australia outlined a number of recommendations each to address the multitude of issues within this Sector – lastly recommending a Parliamentary Inquiry into WIRES and it's management is vital.

You can read our full submission here:





Containers for Cash

Do you have a recycling bin FULL of bottles and cans! Did you know these can help organisations like Animal Care Australia to continue supporting the rights to keep pets?

You can now support Animal Care Australia by returning your cans and bottles to Containers for Cash stations in QLD, WA, VIC and NSW. For each returned bottle or can, Animal Care Australia will get a donation!

This is a great way for you, our supporters, to make a donation and recycle! Showing your love for the work our volunteers do and for our planet at the same time!

To donate in NSW : Get the app: <https://returnandearn-app.com/> or,

Select us from the charities list at the Return & Earn Collection Point.

**Donate
TODAY!**

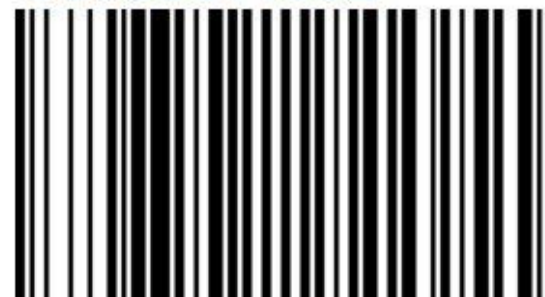
C11377668



*The code to donate in **QLD and WA** is C11377668—and scan the barcode above to get the app.*

*In **Victoria**: Use the barcode below to upload the app and donate when returning your containers for cash at local CDS VIC West, CDS VIC East and CDS VIC North (Visy) Zones.*

C2000011352





Notice of Appointed Committee

ACA's AGM was held on Monday 11th November 2024 via Zoom.

All end of term Committee members (Species representatives) indicated their intent to re-stand for their positions. Term of service: Three years.

Office-bearers positions elected are:

- ⇒ *President — Michael Donnelly*
- ⇒ *Treasurer — Sue Kowalczyk*
- ⇒ *Public Officer — Michelle Grayson*

Committee positions re-elected are:

- ⇒ *Horses & Livestock — Karri Nadazdy*
- ⇒ *Insects & Arachnids — Michaela Storen*
- ⇒ *Native Mammals — Michael Donnelly*

Vacant Committee positions available:

- ⇒ *Fish & Aquatic Species Representative*

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Grayson Secretary – Animal Care Australia — secretary@animalcareaustralia.org.au



You can donate via our website:

<https://www.animalcareaustralia.org.au/donate-to-aca/>



Changes to Tenancies Act will see pets homeward bound in NSW

By: Michael Donnelly — ACA President



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Article cover: [Pet Therapy](#)

Animal Care Australia has been consulting closely with government in the development of the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill over recent months, and in general supports the pet keeping amendments.

The Bill which has broad support from both sides of Parliament in NSW is expected to be assented any time now. The Bill includes new provisions giving tenants greater ability to keep pets.

“It is fantastic to see some clear progress that is moving in the right direction and it will certainly be easier for tenants to have their pets,” said Michael Donnelly, President of Animal Care Australia. “It is great to see our input reflected in the pet-related section of the Bill.”

Animal Care Australia sought to ensure that all rental properties would be pet friendly by default, however political pressure means this is still not the case in the final Bill. The

new laws will still ultimately require consent to be obtained from the landlord with landlords having 21 days to object. The landlord will need to provide valid reasons, outlined within the legislation for rejecting the pets. Tenants will also be able to appeal to the Tribunal.

“We have a major homeless issue in this state and country. Statistics show a large number of pets are surrendered because families have had to decide between a roof over their heads or keeping their pets. Children have had to say goodbye to their pets because a landlord believes the dog or cat will cause more damage than the children. Yet existing legislation protects against that clear bias”, said Mr Donnelly.

“This legislation still leaves potential issues unresolved. With the continued rise in domestic violence, people seeking to find alternative rental accommodation will have to either remain in that situation for up to 21 more days or be forced to conceal the fact they have pets when they apply, and then

risk potential objection or rejection by a landlord.” Mr Donnelly continued, “There is currently no specific regulation preventing landlords advertising their property as a ‘no pets’ property, and we can see this will take the courage of some tenants to challenge those landlords and the validity of the advertisements.”

“Clearly there is more work to be done in this space”.

Animal Care Australia will continue to work with government and collaborate with other parties to ensure future developments on this issue are more animal friendly. To achieve this Animal Care Australia needs your support by joining the organisation. Tenants should also contact their Local Members when there are issues encountered under the new laws.

You can read our Media Release here:



You can read our submission as part of the consultation with the Rental Commissioner here:



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Seeking spider egg sacks

By Michaela Storen — ACA Insect & Arachnid Representative

The hesitation of seeing a spider sack may soon turn to intrigue as the Australian Reptile Park (ARP) encourages people to search their backyards for funnel web spider eggs!

The program at ARP has been developing anti venom since 1981 and has not seen a fatality in the last four decades thanks to the life saving research

Funnel-web spider egg sacs are essential for research because they provide access to large quantities of spiderlings, crucial for studying venom composition, behavior, and biology. Venom research is particularly significant as it can lead to the development of antivenoms and medical treatments for bites. Additionally, funnel-web venom contains peptides with potential therapeutic applications, such as painkillers, neuroprotective agents, and treatments for heart conditions.

Studying egg sacs also helps scientists understand the reproductive biology and population dynamics of funnel-web spiders, which can inform conservation efforts and improve public safety strategies in areas where these spiders are prevalent.

For more information on how to safely catch the egg sacks so sorely needed by the ARP, scan the QR code and help save lives today!

AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK TIMES

WANTED

SYDNEY FUNNEL-WEB SPIDER EGG SACS



MALE



EGG SAC



FEMALE

THE AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Help saves lives across Australia by donating funnel-web spiders and their egg sacs to join the life-saving anti-venom program at the Australian Reptile Park. Each egg sac contains up to 150 spiderlings and each will play a big part in saving local lives.

You'll find funnel-web spiders and egg sacs hiding under rocks, leaves and other debris laying on the ground mostly in bushy areas. Scan the QR code to learn how to safely catch funnel-webs and their egg sacs.

SCAN TO FIND YOUR CLOSEST DROP OFF LOCATION →







No Christmas Feast



Kitten & article cover: [Wallpaper flare](#)

With the season to be jolly upon us and so many things around that we would not usually have out it's a good reminder of what can harm your feline friend.

- Plants – Azaleas, Daisy, Daffodils, Ivy, Lily, Tulip, Oleander, Kalanchoe.
- Food – Onions, Garlic, Cooked bones, Chocolate, Caffeine, Alcohol, Grapes and Raisins, Yeast Dough, Avocado, and Nuts
- Human pain killers.
- Xylitol—One that you may not be aware of. It is an artificial sweetener. This is used in a lot of sugar free lollies etc. This is extremely toxic to cats.

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- Himalayan Salt Lamps. It can look very tempting to lick due to its texture. Ingestion of the salt can cause sodium poisoning.
- Liquid air fresheners are also toxic to cats.

Whilst we are all opening the many presents it is also advised to be aware of any small objects that the cats can ingest causing a blockage.

Hair ties, small toys, buttons, ribbons and string.

Happy holidays to both you and yours – human and feline.

Christmas is full of hidden dangers for our cats and dogs.

Be aware of these common dangers for your pets:

- ♦ Artificial sweetener
- ♦ Raisins, grapes, sultanas & currants
- ♦ Macadamia nuts
- ♦ Tea/coffee
- ♦ Chocolate
- ♦ Fatty meat & bones
- ♦ Decorations (e.g. tinsel & ribbon)
- ♦ Alcohol
- ♦ Uncooked potatoes
- ♦ Allium species (e.g. onions, leeks)
- ♦ Unbaked dough
- ♦ Lilies, holly & mistletoe

In the case of an emergency contact your vet





Snake awareness Info –

Excerpt from article by [Nature4U](#)

Stock Photo ID: [2184873907](#)

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The warmer weather has resulted in seeing a lot of snakes on the move.

While it is impossible to totally snake proof your yard there are some things you can do to minimise the amount of snakes that you may potentially encounter.

Snakes pass through – they usually aren't looking to set up residence at your place but if there is no constant food source and safe place inviting them to stay, they will move on a lot quicker.

Right now they will be looking for two things – food and a mate to breed with. By keeping a tidy yard you will cut down the food option.

Keep yards mowed as low as possible. Long grass provides somewhere for not only snakes but the animals and amphibians they prey upon somewhere to hide. If it is not possible to keep grass as short as possible wear closed in shoes and long pants. If you are worried about your four-legged friend and snakes, train your dogs to stay beside you in these areas.

Don't leave rubbish lying around. If it doesn't fit in the bin take it to the tip. Like long grass, rubbish will provide protection for both snakes

and rodents alike.

Make sure any retaining walls are complete – holes in the walls are perfect hides for snakes.

Sheds and garages should be clutter free. Most of the time they are not completely closed in like houses, so it is extremely common for pythons to seek shelter in garages and sheds. If they are organised it is easier to see if you have a visitor. (things will be moved, objects that were stored higher up may suddenly appear on the floor, and you may find excrement on the floor)

⇒ A high fence is not a guarantee that you will not have visitors. There is an old wives tale that venomous snakes don't climb only pythons do. Not true. Venomous snakes may prefer to utilise the ground but won't hesitate to climb a tree or fence if they are able to find food.

⇒ *Always wear closed in shoes, especially at night. Whilst thongs are a

lot more comfortable to wear in summer, they provide no protection should strike toward you.

⇒ Don't put your hands where you cannot see them. Snakes don't go out of their way to bite people, but when startled it is their mode of defence.

⇒ *If you have outside pets make sure their feeding area is always clean and preferably away from the house. Food attracts rodents. Rodents attract snakes.

⇒ Wiring on cages and enclosures should be as small as possible. A snake won't differentiate that the guinea pig is a pet, not a rodent.

There are some "repellers" on the market. They don't work. Please don't use glue traps either.

If you are worried about your dog and live near bush, or a vacant property etc, look into some snake aversion courses.

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If a snake has found it's way onto your property — LEAVE IT ALONE!

Move away to a safe place/distance.

Ensure your children & pets are safe.

Keep the name of your local snake catcher handy. A business card on the fridge for both a snake catcher and your vet will help out anyone whilst you're not home, and save the snake catchers number in your phone. Save it under snake catcher so you don't need to remember their name in a hurry!

Familiarise yourself with the species of snakes that are in your area, and with their appearance.

If you are unable to confidently identify a snake you spot, from a safe distance take a photo and send it to your local snake catcher. They should offer a free identification service.



Photo: [Townsville Snake Catchers](#)



Image: [12 Animals of Christmas](#)



Broken Promises: How NPWS is Failing Aviculture, Conservation and Preservation

By: Sam Davis — ACA Bird Representative

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Article cover: Stock Photo ID: [1066441376](#)

The Draft “Dealing in Protected Birds Code of Practice 2023” marks yet another step in what has been an exhausting and frustrating journey for aviculturists in NSW. Over the last decade, I have personally seen the government’s repeated attempts to reform avian licensing systems fail to reflect the practical needs of those involved in bird keeping. Despite repeated promises for a streamlined, risk-based system, as recommended in the “2014 Biodiversity Review”, little progress has been made. Instead, aviculturists are met with increasing red tape and a licensing system that seems neither functional nor in line with the conservation goals it claims to support.

Background: A System Designed for Preservation

Aviculture has long been focused on the preservation of species. Bird keepers work tirelessly to maintain genetically diverse populations of native and exotic birds, contributing to conservation efforts by ensuring that species can thrive in captivity.

Over the decades, the illegal trapping of native species has been almost entirely stamped out within the aviculture community in Australia. Indeed, the focus is now squarely on preserving species, especially those that may be vulnerable in the wild.

Despite this, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has struggled to create a functional, risk-based licensing system that aligns with the recommendations of the “2014 Biodiversity Review”. The report recommended reducing regulatory burdens for commonly kept species and engaging community-based programs that would support the conservation and preservation of avian species. Yet, in the years since, NPWS has consistently failed to deliver on these goals.

A Broken Licensing System

Aviculturists have long been advocating for a licensing system that reflects the realities of bird keeping. Unfortunately, what we are faced with instead is a system that does little more than create unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles. Non-compliance with the current system is

widespread, and it’s not because of a desire to evade regulation—rather, it’s because the system itself is broken. The requirements for licensing are convoluted, and the licensing scheme does nothing to protect wild populations of our native birds.

In fact, the current system makes it easier for those with ill intentions to work around the law. Once someone acquires a pair of native birds, they can claim that all subsequent offspring were bred in captivity. Aviculturists are keen to assist with conservation and preservation, we desire a licensing system that works, encourages and acknowledges the contribution bird breeders can make to both conservation and preservation of species.

A Missed Opportunity

In 2017, the NSW government allocated \$2.5 million to develop a truly risk-based licensing system that would address the core issues sensibly. A comprehensive package was created, which had widespread support across the avicultural community, and from

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other key stakeholders. This reform package included risk assessments for numerous species and was based on input from a wide range of experts, including representatives from wildlife rescue, the pet industry, and aviculture clubs.

However, despite all the work that went into this reform, the package was never implemented. Internal resistance from NPWS, compounded by opposition from the RSPCA and other groups such as WIRES, prevented the reform from progressing. The RSPCA, while an organisation that enforces cruelty laws, has no expertise in wildlife conservation or aviculture. Their opposition to reforms that would benefit the preservation of species in captivity has only served to further alienate aviculturists from the regulatory process.

Recent Developments: A Temporary System That's Not Fit for Purpose

The latest failure from NPWS came when the contract for its online record-keeping system expired. Rather than having a functional new system ready, NPWS hastily threw together a temporary form-based system, which is riddled with issues. This system is cumbersome, inefficient, and entirely unfit for purpose. Aviculturists attempting to comply with the already burdensome licensing requirements are now faced with an online system that creates more problems than it solves. This incompetence is only going to lead to further non-compliance, and a deepening mistrust between aviculturists and NPWS.

If the aim of the NPWS licensing scheme is to protect wild populations of

native species, it is failing spectacularly. Rather than fostering compliance and building trust, NPWS has created a system that is so dysfunctional that it actively discourages people from participating. Aviculturists are your allies in conservation, not your adversaries. Yet time and time again, NPWS has shown that it is more interested in maintaining control over a broken system than in working with aviculturists to create a solution that works for everyone.

The Draft Code of Practice 2023: A Step Backwards

After much lobbying, a further process commenced with an additional budget of at least \$750,000. We were assured of openness accountability and transparency multiple times by Peter Stathis, who led the project on behalf of NPWS. Nothing could be further from the truth. Documents that most departments routinely include on their websites have been refused with formal legal requests required to obtain them. Questions regarding openness accountability and transparency have been asked by members of parliament and still NPWS resists.

When the Draft Code of Practice 2023 was presented, it quickly became clear that this so-called "risk-based" system was not what it seemed. Rather than reducing red tape for common avicultural species, the draft includes more restrictions than the current licensing regime. Under the new code, bird keepers would be required to register with NPWS, report any bird trades within seven days, and be limited to trading no more than 30 birds per year. These requirements are not only more restrictive

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than the current licensing system, but they also make no sense from a conservation perspective.

At a meeting of the Species List Advisory Committee (SLAC) where the Draft Code was first presented, multiple members expressed confusion and frustration over the new restrictions. Despite this, NPWS refused to explain why these additional limitations were included or who had proposed them. The Draft Code as it stands is more about controlling aviculturists than about protecting wild populations, and it will only lead to further non-compliance.

Moving Forward: Real Solutions

It's time for NPWS to take a step back and reconsider its approach to avian licensing. The \$2.5 million reform package developed several years ago remains the most viable solution. It was created with the input of all relevant stakeholders and was designed to create a risk-based system that would reduce unnecessary regulation while still protecting native species. To resolve the impasse, NPWS must implement the \$2.5 million reform package or the 32 common species that were identified as candidates for deregulation should simply be moved onto the exempt list within the "Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017".

NPWS: We will continue to push back

For years, aviculturists have been calling for a risk-based licensing system that reduces red tape and fosters collaboration between bird keepers and

conservation authorities. Instead, we have been met with delays, incompetence, and a licensing regime that seems designed to frustrate rather than to protect. The recent introduction of a temporary online system that is riddled with problems is just the latest in a long line of failures from NPWS.

It's time for NPWS to listen to the people who are actually working to preserve species and implement the reforms that were developed years ago. We need a system that works, one that supports aviculture as a key player in the conservation and preservation of species. Until that happens, the avicultural community will continue to push back against a licensing regime that does more harm than good.



Caballo de Navidad via PublicDomainPictures.net



Animal Species Representative – Fish/aquatic species

Experience:

Animal Care Australia is seeking a person who has reasonable advocacy experience and an understanding of the differences between animal rights and animal welfare.

Animal Care Australia is seeking a person who has reasonable experience in the keeping & breeding of fish – tropical, freshwater and marine.

Essential skills:

- ⇒ Communication skills (oral & written)
- ⇒ Time management
- ⇒ Able to work as part of a Team

Desirable – but not essential:

The inclusion of cephalopods in animal welfare legislation will result in Codes of Practice needing to be examined and in some cases to be drafted. Knowledge of keeping these species will be of great benefit.

Having a membership of an Association for the keeping & breeding of fish species or contacts to groups.

Specific Tasks

- ⇒ Represent all species specific member organisations to communicate current animal-related community and welfare issues.
- ⇒ Undertake work including drafting of policy advice, project work of a specialist nature, research and analyse current legislation and policies and prepare associated reports for consideration by the Animal Care Australia Committee.
- ⇒ Assist Animal Care Australia to work with government, non-government & community stakeholders to ensure policy issues are coordinated and effectively communicated as per community and government expectations.
- ⇒ Provide support to the Animal Care Australia Executive and ensure effective coordination of the business of the association, including up to date reports for Animal Care Australia's social communications – social media, website and newsletter.
- ⇒ Abide by and support Animal Care Australia's Code of Ethics, Mission Statement, Objects, Constitution, Communication Policy and Anti-discrimination & Harassment Policy.
- ⇒ Other duties as necessary.



If you would like to join the Animal Care Australia Team or you know someone who would be ideal for the position please apply via SEEK Volunteer or email us at: aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au

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Vet Help & Resources

Are you currently having difficulty with the cost of living and genuinely cannot afford the vet bills or even get your pet to a vet?

Below is a list of organisations or options that can support people on limited incomes.

Desexing

If you have a unwanted litter a lot of rescues will rehome the kittens or puppies and desex the mum for free.

In South Australia, [Paws & Claws](#) offer free desexing. [CATS](#) – is low-cost desexing for cats only.

In New South Wales & Queensland the Animal Welfare League also run free desexing clinics:

[Animal Welfare League – NSW](#)

[Animal Welfare league – QLD](#)

National Assistance:

[National Desexing Network](#)

[National payment plan option](#) – VetPay

State Assistance:

South Australia

[Safe Pets Safe Families](#) – Vet Crisis program have partner Vet clinics and put people on a Centrepay payment to pay off their vet bill.

[Pay it Paw-Ward](#) program

Victoria

[Pet Medical Crisis](#)

[Pets of the homeless](#)

Tasmania

[Hobart Community Veterinary Hospital](#) – financial assistance

New South Wales

[Great Western Animal Hospital](#) – Pendle Hill – offers treatment assistance via VetPay or Zippay.

Australian Capital Territory

[ACT Pet Crisis Support](#)

Queensland

[Palliative care and end of life for pets](#) – Sunset Vets

Northern Territory

[PAWS Darwin Community Vet](#)

Western Australia

[Perth Vet Bill Assistance Inc.](#)



Photo by Gustavo Fring

Cont'd next page...

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Outreach Services & Other

There are also some outreach services for people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of, some of these services are free and offer other supports.

National – assistance for homeless persons with pets

[Pets In The Park](#)

[Pets of the homeless](#)

South Australia

[Paws & Pals](#) – homeless support

We run free pop-up vet clinics in Adelaide (City), Smithfield, Riverland, DV shelters across SA, and some other locations. We also have other supports we provide. Talk to your support agency for a referral to our clinics.

New South Wales

[Regional Community Vet Assistance](#) – not all services are free.

Vets & Pet Services that accept [Afterpay](#)



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Executive



Michael Donnelly
President



Sam Davis
Vice-President



Michelle Grayson
Secretary/Public Officer



Sue Kowalczyk
Treasurer

Species Representatives



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MISSION STATEMENT

“Animal Care Australia (ACA) is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of pet and companion animals in Australia”.

ACA encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care. To encourage responsible pet ownership, and the respectful treatment of all animals in our community ACA continues to promote welfare education over regulation



OBJECTIVES

- To represent Animal Care Groups as the peak animal welfare body
- To engage and advise Government and legislators on welfare issues relating to pets and companion animals.
- To protect the rights of ethical hobbyists & animal keepers to breed and keep pets and companion animals.
- To clarify the difference between animal rights and animal welfare
- To promote higher animal welfare outcomes



ACA GENERAL MEETINGS 2025

7.30 to 8.30pm

MARCH 10th

MAY 12th

JULY 14th

SEPTEMBER 8th

NOVEMBER 10th — AGM

Meetings in 2024 will continue via Zoom to ensure members nation-wide can attend.

Any member wishing to join a meeting will need to RSVP by no later than 5pm on that Monday via email: aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au with your details. A link for the meeting will be emailed to you.

Animal Care Australia Inc.

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